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Message Text

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46
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EB-07 COME-00 AGRE-00 TRSE-00
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PRS-01 SP-02 /048 W
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FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3817
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASQ KINGSTON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L GEORGETOWN 2465

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SOPN, PROP, GY
SUBJECT: REPORTS OF IMPENDING MILK AND BREAD FAMINE DENIED

SUMMARY: IN RESPONSE TO PRESS REPORTS FROM GREAT BRITAIN ALLEGING AN IMPENDING MILK AND BREAD FAMINE IN GUYANA, THE GUYANA TRADES UNION CONGRESS (GTUC) HAS DUBBED SUCH ALLEGATIONS AS FALSE AND MALICIOUS. MEANWHILE, THE "CATHOLIC STANDARD" CONTINUES TO COMPLAIN OF A GROWING CREDIBILITY GAP BETWEEN THE PEOPLE AND THE GOG. END SUMMARY.

1. THE GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED "CHRONICLE" ON DECEMBER 6 HEADLINED A STATEMENT FROM THE GTUC DUBBING AS FALSE AND MALICIOUS REPORTS THAT HAVE APPEARED IN THE "LONDON TIMES" AND "DAILY TELEGRAPH" UNDER REUTERS DATELINE CLAIMING THAT GUYANA FACES A MILK AND BREAD FAMINE. THE GTUC MAINTAINED THAT THE REPORTS OF FAMINE WERE SPREAD BY QUOTE ENEMIES OF SOCIALISM AND THE REVOLUTION UNQUOTE AS WELL AS BY SOME DISAFFECTED GUYANESE. THE "CHRONICLE" ALSO REPORTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S MUIEF INFORMATION OFFICER HAS PROTESTED THE INACCURATE REPORTS AND DEMANDED RETRACTIONS
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BY THE NEWSPAPERS INVOLVED.

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2. APPROPRIATELY, THE ROMAN CATHOLIC ORGAN "CATHOLIC STANDARD" CARRIED AN EDITORIAL IN ITS EDITION OF THE 6TH CONCERNING THE QUOTE CREDIBILITY GAP UNQUOTE THAT HAS SUPPOSEDLY OPENED UP BETWEEN THE PEOPLE AND THE GOVERNMENT. THE "STANDARD" CONTINUING ITS THEME ON FREEDOM OF THE PRESS, STATED THAT THE GAP IS CAUSED BY GOVERMNANT OWNERSHIP OF MOST OF THE MEDIA, AND EMPHASIZED THE NEED FOR PUBLICATIONS LIKE THE "STANDARD" AND OTHER OPPOSITION ORGANS SUCH AS THE "MIRROR" AND "DAYCLEAN."

3. THE GOVERNMENT'S CHIEF EDITORIAL SPOKESMAN CARL BLACKMAN IN THE "CHRONICLE" OF DECEMBER 5 INDIRECTLY ADDRESSED THE SENSITIVE ISSUE OF A CREDIBILITY GAP. IN DISCUSSING THE COMING YEAR OF AUSTERITY, BLACKMAN ROUTINELY HIGHLIGHTED THE DESTABILIZATION THEME, BUT HE ADMITTED THAT MANY PEOPLE IN GUYANA DO NOT CONSIDER THE THREAT TO

THE COUNTRY'S STABILITY REAL. BLACKMAN ALSO CONCEDED THAT BELT-TIGHTENING MEASURES TO MEET THE ECONOMIC CRISIS WILL NOT BE POPULAR AND THAT A QUOTE SOMBRE MOOD UNQUOTE PRESENTLY EXISTS IN GUYANA. HE CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO QUOTE TAKE SERIOUS NOTE OF THE COMPLAINTS AND CONCERN OF THE PEOPLE
R STILL MAINTAIN THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE TO A PNC GOVERNMENT UNQOUTE.

4. COMMENT: IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT THE ARTICLE CONCERNING THE GTUC DENIAL OF AN IMPENDING MILK AND BREAD FAMINE STRESSES THAT SUCH MALICIOUS REPORTS ARE CIRCULATED BY GUYANESE BOTH AT HOME AND ABROAD. THE GOVERNMENT IS INCREASINGLY EMPHASIZING THE ROLE THAT GUYANESE THEMSELVES PLAN IN DESTABILIZATION. WHILE THE LOCAL MILK INDUSTRY HAS BEEN PLAGUED WITH MARKETING PROBLEMS AT PRESENT, THERE IS NO CONFIDENTIAL

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SHORTAGE OF EITHER OF THESE ITEMS.
AT PRESENT GROCERY STORES AND LOCAL MARKET PLACES APPEAR WELL STOCKED ALBEIT AT HIGHER PRICES.
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TAGS: SOPN, PROP, GY, UK
To: STATE
Type: TE
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